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THE MOST INTERESTING AMERICAN

BY

JULIAN STREET

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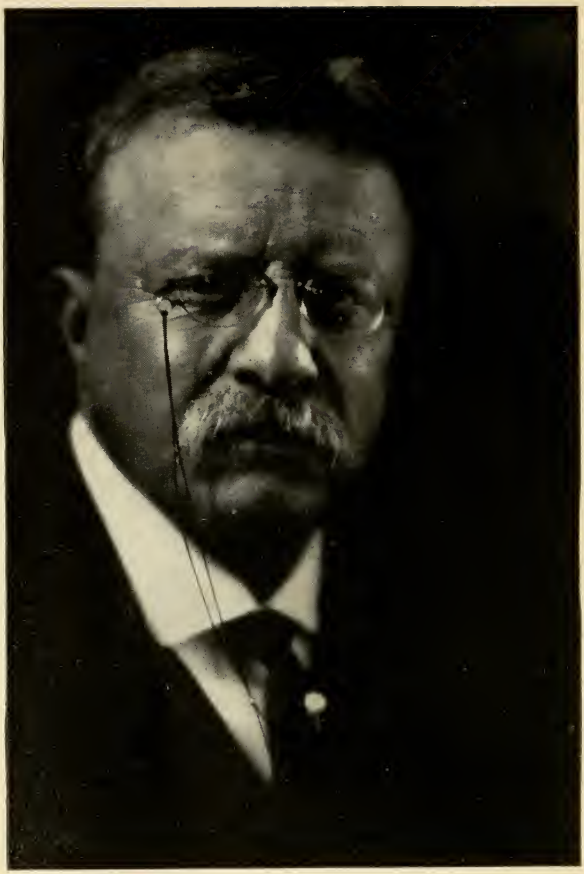

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Theodore Roosevelt

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JULIAN STREET

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AS a child I remember waiting eagerly in the window of our house to catch a first glimpse of an uncle I had never seen, but who was the hero of my dreams, an army officer who had fought the Indians. When I had waited half the afternoon a man came up our steps and rang the bell. He wore a dark overcoat and a derby hat, and since I was looking for a man wearing a uniform and sword I paid slight heed to him. But presently he came into the room, and I learned that, after all, this was my soldier uncle. To this day I remember the shock of that

disappointment. I do not remember what he looked like; only what he did not look like: that he did n't look like my idea of an army officer; that he was nothing to show off to the other boys.

When, a short time since, I first met Colonel Roosevelt, I felt a slight recurrence of this disappointment. I cannot pretend that I expected him to be attired in the khaki of the cavalry or to be heavily armed, but I did expect him to be—what shall I say?—to be more like the cartoons; to be, somehow, wilder looking. As I had not expected my uncle to look like a civilian, I had not expected Colonel Roosevelt to look like a conservative banker of Amsterdam or The Hague. And that was what he made me think of as he sat behind his desk in one of the editorial offices of the "Metropolitan Magazine."

The only sign there was about him that afternoon of the much pictured Rough Rider was the broad-brimmed, putty-colored hat which he laid upon his desk as he came in, and even that was but a modified version of the out-and-out cowboy hat, such as they wear around Medora.

Though I missed the cartoon costume, I was not to be cheated of the smile. It met all specifications. As the Colonel advanced to greet me he showed his hard, white teeth, wrinkled his red weather-beaten face, and squinted his eyes half shut behind the heavy lenses of his spectacles, in suggestion, as it seemed to me, of a large, amiable lion which comes up purring gently as though to say: "You need n't be afraid. I 've just had luncheon."

His handshake, too, surprised me.

Though his manner is heartily cordial, his grip in shaking hands cannot be described as firm. It struck me that he had been obliged to shake hands much more than he wished to, and that he had formed the habit of saving himself by letting the other fellow do the gripping. Nor was it the massive rawboned hand I had expected. It is rather small, very thick through the palm, and —I hesitate to write it—somewhat fat. Let me hasten to add, however, that it is far from being a weak-looking hand, and that, as to color, it is highly satisfactory, the back of it being as brown as a glove. For the rest, his torso is like a barrel, his neck thick, short, and full of power, and his hair, as he himself has said, "has always been like rope."

After I had met him a man asked me

if he had aged. I remember that the word "aged," applied to Colonel Roosevelt, struck me as bizarre. True, his mustache is now quite gray, but he has not aged and will not age. He has simply ripened, matured. He is fifty-seven years old (two years younger than President Wilson and one year younger than Ex-President Taft), looks forty-seven, and evidently feels as men of thirty-seven wish they felt.

It was the day after his Plattsburg speech, and I had been there but a moment when reporters came to find out what he had to say about the criticisms of his speech which had been printed in the morning papers. The Colonel remained seated at his desk while he dictated the first few paragraphs of a statement which the reporters wrote down word for word, but as he warmed

to his work he arose and paced slowly back and forth, thinking out his remarks very carefully, speaking in a measured tone, enunciating with a kind of exaggerated distinctness which is always characteristic of him, forming each syllable elaborately with his mobile lips, the workings of which cause his mustache to gyrate at times in a curious manner. All these mannerisms are manifested in his most casual conversation, but when he is making a "statement" or dictating a letter they become extreme.

When the statement was complete Colonel Roosevelt resumed his seat and for a moment discussed, informally, certain aspects of the Plattsburg matter. He did not say that these subsequent utterances were, as the saying goes, "not for publication," but the

change in his tone and manner made the fact so clear that to say so was unnecessary. For the most part he spoke gravely, looking up earnestly at the reporters who were standing about his desk, their eyes fixed intently upon his face. Their physiognomies were, like his, exceedingly grave, and the thought came to me that the Colonel's facial expression was somehow reflected, for the moment, upon their features. However, it was not until he lapsed briefly into irony, turning on, as he did so, that highly specialized smile, that I perceived how truly those young men reflected him. At his smile they all grinned open and responsive grins. To watch their faces was like watching the faces of an audience at a play: when the hero was indignant they became indignant; when he sneered they sneered; and when

he was amused they seemed almost to quiver with rapturous merriment.

Then, and at other times, I studied carefully the Colonel's mode of speech. Each syllable leaves his mouth a perfectly formed thing; his teeth snap shut between the syllables, biting them apart, and each important, each accented syllable is emphasized not merely vocally, but also with a sharp forward thrust of the head which seems to throw the word clattering into the air. When he utters the first personal pronoun it sounds like "I-ye-e-e-e-," with the final "e's" trailing off like the end of an echo.

Colonel Roosevelt feels strongly about things and, as we know, expresses himself strongly, but it is my belief that his indescribably vigorous manner of speaking has at times been confused in

people's minds with what he has actually said. Though his language is forcible, it is never "strong" in the usual sense of that word as applied to language. Regarding strong language, as regarding other things, he practises what he preaches. He is himself what he called Admiral Mahan, "a Christian gentleman," but as Disraeli wrote of some one, "his Christianity is muscular." I talked to him on many subjects which, had he been a profane man, would have elicited profanity, but he was not betrayed. Of Mr. Josephus Daniels, he remarked, for example: "Of course he 's a *fright*-ful Secretary!" and it sounded terrible enough. Again in speaking of another man of whom he disapproves he called him "That *creat*-ure!" and quite the most awful word I have ever heard him apply to any man

was the word *"skunk-k-k!"* applied by him in a moment of great irritation. Now, of course, if your conception of a president, or an ex-president, implies a cold, exalted, supernatural being, half man, half god, with a flow of conversation that never sounds more colloquial than John McCullough reading Ruskin's "Stones of Venice"—if that is your conception of what a president should be, why, then you might not be pleased with Colonel Roosevelt or his language in private conversation.

Colonel Roosevelt drinks a little light wine, and smokes not at all. A friend of his explained his abstinence to me in this way: "His vitality is such that he does n't need the stimulation of alcohol and nicotine, as some of the rest of us feel we do. And it is the same

about swearing: he does n't need to swear, because he can say 'Pacifist' or 'Woodrow Wilson' or 'William Jennings Bryan' in tones which must make the Recording Angel shudder. But the only Roosevelt Dam is the one they named for him in Arizona."

I was reminded of this when, in the course of conversation, President Wilson's series of notes to Germany was mentioned.

"Oh, how I 'd have liked to praise Wilson if he 'd given me the chance!" exclaimed Colonel Roosevelt with feeling. "I 'm not for Roosevelt; I 'm not for any man; I 'm for the United States. Every president has a right to time, at first, in which to formulate his policies. Through the early part of the Wilson administration I waited and hoped, in spite of a belief that I have

long held that the pedagogic mind is generally too theoretical and abstract for politics. Even now, if the President were a business man, and had not familiarized himself with history, and written history, he might be forgiven. But he is a college president and a historian, and has, by very direct implication, criticized Jefferson and Madison for some of the very errors of which he himself, as President, has been guilty. In his 'History of the American People' he speaks of Jefferson's reduction of the army and navy, refers to our 'amateur' soldiers in the War of 1812, and says that 'the war began with a series of defeats in the North at once ridiculous and disgraceful.'

"Bryan! Mexico! Daniels! No fleet manœuvers for the first two years! 'Too proud to fight!' And all these let-

ters to Germany!" The Colonel had the air of snorting his contempt; then he added slowly, sardonically: "Of late I have come almost to the point of *loathing* a bee-*you*-ti-ful, *pol*-ished *dic*-tion!"

Colonel Roosevelt knows very well that he is severely criticized by many people for his attacks upon the administration; that a considerable body of his fellow citizens attribute those attacks to political motives, while others take the point of view that, though he has told the truth on vitally important matters, he ought to have preserved a dignified silence. In this connection I asked him if there were precedents for criticism of a president by an ex-president. He replied:

"John Quincy Adams went to the House of Representatives after having been president and became the most bit-

ter critic and opponent of the Mexican and slavery policies of Presidents Tyler and Polk." Then, with a sarcastic smile, he added: "The most striking attack of this character I know of was, however, made by a president upon an ex-president. I refer to the offer of twenty-five millions to Colombia by Mr. Wilson because of what I did, as President, about the Panama Canal."

These points will, perhaps, be of interest to those who criticize Colonel Roosevelt on the ground that his fulminations are in questionable taste. And it may be added that where questions of taste are raised, as against the welfare of the country, taste cuts but a small figure in the Colonel's mind. Feeling that he is not responsible for the leadership or fate of any party, he considers that he can serve the nation

best at this time as a fearless critic, a critic who can speak freely without having to consider the effect of his words in alienating the German-American, the Pacifist, or any other vote. Acting along this line he is strongly advocating the adoption by the United States of the Swiss system of universal military training, for the reasons, first, that it would practically guarantee the country against invasion; second, that it would give American young men a sense of their individual duty to the Government; and, third, that the moderate amount of military discipline and training involved would benefit the men of the country morally and physically.

"The people who consider me an opportunist," he remarked, "will, of course, say that I 've taken up with pre-

paredness merely to feather my own nest, although, as every one who will take the trouble to find out may ascertain, I have been shouting preparedness at the top of my lungs for thirty-five years. Also," the Colonel continued, "they will say: 'If Roosevelt believes in the Swiss system now, why did n't he believe in it when he was president?' I 'll tell you why: I did investigate the Swiss system years ago, but the need of universal military service, and likewise the folly of such treaties as The Hague Convention, did not come out clearly until this war started—though now they should be clear to every one. No one should blame the President for not having favored universal military service when he came into office, but certainly he ought to be for it now.

"Then there are these Jacks who

say: 'What did Roosevelt do for preparedness when he was president?' They try my patience. I labored to get four battleships a year with other ships in proportion. Finally I succeeded in getting a program of two a year. Before I came in, Congress had stopped appropriating money for battleships. My two-battleship program was continued until the Democrats came into power in 1910. Then it was dropped. When I became president the navy was run down. I could only get public opinion back of me on one thing, the navy or the army, and I selected the navy because it is our first line of defense. When I left office we were next to England as a naval power. Now we are fourth or fifth. I sent the fleet of sixteen battleships around the world—a thing no other power ever

did, and which foreign naval authorities did not think could be done. I have always regarded that world cruise as one of the best things I ever did for the promotion of peace. It is right that the people of the United States remember the men who work for the navy and those who work against it. Those who helped me to build up the fleet were Lodge of Massachusetts, Clarke of Arkansas, Beveridge of Indiana, Hopkins of Illinois, Cockrell of Missouri, and O. H. Platt of Connecticut. My secretaries of the navy were Long, Moody, Morton, Bonaparte, Metcalf, and Newberry. Those who were the principal opponents of the navy were Senators Hale, Tillman, and Perkins. Hale was the big fellow. He used Tillman. The manipulation of the naval committee was such that whatever

Mr. Hale's navy yard at Portsmouth needed it received and whatever Mr. Tillman's navy yard (Charleston) needed it also received, although both navy yards ought to have been closed. At that time it would have been useless for me to try to get them closed, but now, with public sentiment aroused, it would be possible, if the secretary of the navy would do his duty. But he has been opening useless yards instead of closing them.

"As to our little army, I built it up and made it twice as efficient. The army corps I sent to Cuba under General Barry was as far superior to Shafter's army, with which I went to Cuba, as light is to dark. I fought as hard as I could, while I was president, for big manœuvering camps, and I did succeed in getting a general staff for the army,

though I could never get one for the navy."

I asked his opinion as to our duties in connection with the European war.

"I felt very strongly," he said, "that this Government should have taken action concerning Belgium on the 28th, 29th, or 30th of July, but I held my tongue. You must remember that it was under my administration that the United States entered The Hague Convention. I should never have permitted such a thing had I not believed we acted in good faith. It was clearly our duty to protest, but I waited and said nothing, thinking that perhaps the President wished to assemble a long list of atrocities so that the people would be behind him in protesting. But Dinant followed, and Louvain, and Reims, and no protest was made. In-

stead we were instructed to be 'neutral even in thought' toward those who had broken faith with us and with civilization. So it went until the *Lusitania* was sunk. If we had acted with strength in Mexico, the poor souls who went down on the *Lusitania* would still be alive. But by our Mexican performances we had shown Europe what to expect of us." Colonel Roosevelt paused for a moment, then, grimly, he added: "Haiti is apparently the kind of country we can handle now. Our conduct of international affairs, so far as that vast and powerful nation is concerned, seems to have been admirable."

I may say here, as well as at any other point, perhaps, that my interview with Colonel Roosevelt and my observation of him covered several days

in both New York and Oyster Bay.

At Sagamore Hill he is not so much the Dutch banker as the American gentleman in his country home. The place is three miles from the station, upon a height reached by a long, winding drive leading from the highroad. The house, which has lawn and trees about it, and has a view over Long Island Sound, is a very American-looking structure of red brick and gray painted wood. It is not at all an "imposing" residence, although that other word, "rambling," which is so much used in describing houses, may with justice be applied to it. It is a house which, from the outside, does not look nearly so spacious as it actually is.

Through the center of it runs a wide, dark hall, to the right of which, near the front door, is the library, or rather

the room which Colonel Roosevelt uses as an office, for it is improper to refer to any especial room at Sagamore Hill as a library, since all are filled with books. This room is a small museum. There are animal skins upon the floor and mounted heads of animals upon the walls. Among the pictures on the walls are a portrait of Mrs. Roosevelt, one of Colonel Roosevelt's father, and others of Lincoln, Washington, and Daniel Boone. Also there is the bronze cougar, by Alexander Proctor, which was presented to the colonel by his famous "Tennis Cabinet," and a bronze cowboy, by Frederic Remington.

Even more like a museum than the library is the great living room which has been added, of late years, at the end of the hall. It is a very large room two stories high, with a trilateral ceil-

ing and wainscoting of wood in a pleasing shade of light brown, oiled but not polished. Large as this room is, and rich as it is in trophies and souvenirs of all sorts, its finest quality is its freedom from imposingness. It is not in any way magnificent or austere, yet it is a very handsome, dignified room, with the kind of handsomeness which does not smite the eye nor overpower the senses, but which, upon the other hand, makes the stranger feel welcome and at ease, and tells him that he is in the home of a prosperous but simple and cultivated American family. What I am really trying to say is that the Roosevelts live comfortably, but without "side." They do not keep a butler or a footman; their chauffeur is a negro.

Into this setting the Colonel fits felicitously. At Oyster Bay he usually

wears an olive-drab suit with knickerbockers, and golf stockings, and though he is a most hospitable and tactful host, one feels that when the guests have gone he will welcome the opportunity to go tramping off through the woods with Mrs. Roosevelt or to take her rowing in the skiff.

Without Mrs. Roosevelt the house at Sagamore Hill would be as imperfect as without the Colonel. She is a woman of the greatest charm and tact —precisely the kind of woman to be the wife of a public man, precisely the kind of woman who so seldom is. She makes every one who comes to Sagamore Hill feel instantly at ease, and she has the gracious faculty for seeming to know about and be genuinely interested in the people whom she meets, instead of wishing them to know about and be in-

terested in her. More than this, she has wit. One day at luncheon the Colonel was speaking of the need of universal military service, when he touched sarcastically upon the song entitled "I Did n't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." Whereupon Mrs. Roosevelt, whose husband and four boys would go to war if war came, remarked:

"I did n't raise my boy to be the *only* soldier!"

While Colonel Roosevelt may not have stated publicly what his exact course of action with regard to Mexico or to the European situation would have been were he president, it is generally understood by those who know him that he believed in sending an army officer of the caliber of General Wood to Mexico to organize the Mexicans themselves

for the work of restoring and maintaining order, as was done by General Wood in Cuba. Further, it is known that he believes that a protest against the invasion of Belgium should have been made by this Government, not after the invasion but *before;* that is, when it began to seem probable that such a thing would occur. He believes that the President of the United States had an opportunity to play a part as great as that of Lincoln or Washington, and that the way to have played it would have been to notify the German Government that, in the event of a violation of Belgian soil, the United States would call a *posse comitatus* of nations to intervene by force if need be.

Colonel Roosevelt regards it as quite conceivable that with some one to rally them, England and Italy would have

immediately signified their willingness to join in such a movement, and that most of the nations which have remained neutral might likewise have given their support to so just a cause. By this plan Colonel Roosevelt believes that the violation of Belgium, with its succeeding horrors, might actually have been prevented.

I spoke to the Colonel of the impression held by many of those who do not believe in him, that he is of a belligerent disposition and that, to use the usual expression, he "would have dragged the country into war."

"I know what they think about me," he declared. "Because I stood up for the army and navy and for American rights, also because of the newspaper cartoons of me as a Rough Rider carrying a club or shooting revolvers into

the air, also because I speak my mind when I think I ought to, and because they know I would have taken action in regard to Mexico and in regard to Belgium—because of these things there are many people who say: 'That man Roosevelt is a bloodthirsty anarchist!' These people forget or ignore the fact that during the seven and a half years in which I was president we never fired a shot at a foreign foe, although complications arose from time to time, and although I insisted absolutely upon protecting American citizens everywhere, as, for example, in the case of Perdicaris, when I demanded Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead. But, although I got the country into no wars, they say I am warlike. President Wilson, on the other hand, is a man of peace. He has waged peace with Mexico and Haiti,

and lost a lot of men, and he has been waging peace with Germany, while Germany has been murdering our men, women, and children with her submarines.

"Now, as a matter of fact—though I do not expect these people who picture me as bloodthirsty to believe it—I abhor war. But where I differ with the pacifists is this: I regard war as a very terrible thing, to be avoided by every decent means, but I do not regard it as the worst conceivable thing in the world. I think some things are even more to be avoided than war; and these people who say I want war are right to this extent: Let them rape just one American woman in Mexico—and they have raped many—and I should have action inside six hours. There was never any question as to whether the American

people would back me or not when I was president. They would always back me to assert American rights and defend American honor. They are the same people to-day, but they are dulled, momentarily, by a five years' debauch of professional pacifism.

"Every man has a soft and easy side to him. I speak now out of the abundance of my own heart. I 'm a domestic man. I have always wanted to be with Mrs. Roosevelt and my children, and now with my grandchildren. I 'm not a brawler. I detest war. But if war came I 'd have to go, and my four boys would go, too, because we have ideals in this family. I 've had a good deal from life, and I am not afraid to die, but any man who is a father ought to know whether I want to see my four

boys go off to fight. This feeling is so strong in me that when I have read in the papers that the President has sent still another note to Germany, fending off trouble for a while, I have to combat a feeling of relief by thinking of what our duty is and of how dreadful it would have been for me if men in the days of Washington and Lincoln had been 'too proud to fight.'

"The average man does not want to be disturbed. He does n't want to be called upon to leave his business and his family, and do a distinctly unpleasant duty. That is natural enough. Nevertheless, you can appeal to either of the two soul sides of that man. If you appeal to his deepest sense of duty, to all that he has of strength and of courage and of high-mindedness, you can make him shake off his sloth, his

self-indulgence, his short-sightedness, or his timidity, and stand up and do, and dare, and die at need, just as the men of Bunker Hill and Trenton and Yorktown and Gettysburg and Shiloh did and dared and died.

"But if, upon the other hand, with great rhetorical ingenuity and skill, you furnish that man with high-sounding names to cloak ignoble action, or ignoble failure to act, then it is so natural as to be pardonable in the average man to accept the excuse thrust upon him and to do the ignoble thing which the man who ought to be his leader counsels him to do.

"It is with the people of a nation much as with a regiment. There is an old saying that there are few bad regiments but plenty of bad colonels. No matter how good a regiment may be, if,

in the stress of a great fight, its colonel advises each man as a matter of duty to do whatever is best for his own comfort and safety, and if the colonel, still uttering lofty abstract sentiments, then marches to the rear, it may be taken for granted that the regiment will follow."

The anti-Roosevelt reader, wishing to take exception to everything having to do with Colonel Roosevelt, may perhaps take exception to the title of this volume. To this reader I wish to say that my title is not only temperate (mark you, I refrained from making it either "The Most Interesting Man in the World" or "The Greatest American") but that I can prove it true. All one need do to prove Roosevelt the most interesting American, is to ask the question: "Well, if he is n't, who is?"

In reply to this the anti-Roosevelt man will make a half-hearted effort to play Edison as a trump card and will thereafter give up.

Yet I believe that even those who are willing to concede to Colonel Roosevelt everything in the way of being interesting, or even everything in the way of greatness, do not generally grasp, all at one time, the completeness of his versatility.

In the course of casual reading I have lately happened upon three Roosevelt items from curiously assorted sources. In the "Century Magazine" I read of the visit of an American authoress to the home of Mistral, the Provençal poet, and learned that "a heavily inscribed photograph of Theodore Roosevelt hangs in the hall in full view of the bust of Lamartine."

In a New York newspaper I read an interview with M. Jules Bois, the French journalist, author, and poet. Said M. Bois: "Theodore Roosevelt is perhaps the greatest man in the world. To the European he typifies all that is essentially American. Abroad he is considered the greatest American."

A day or two later I read that Champ Clark had been talking about Roosevelt. "He knows a little more about more things than any man in the country," declared the Speaker; and at the risk of seeming, perhaps, to digress, I cannot refrain from adding that Mr. Clark, though a Democrat, declared further that "Roosevelt is not mealy-mouthed."

But let me point in another way the versatility of Roosevelt. Has it ever struck you that he combines within

himself qualities and attainments which actually are not combined in the entire population of any city in the United States?

The city which would have in the sum of all its people a Roosevelt must possess, among its inhabitants, the following:

1. *A Physical Culture Expert:* Roosevelt built himself up from a sickly child to a man upon whose vigor it is needless to comment.

2. *A Historian:* Roosevelt began to write his "History of the Naval War of 1812" while yet a Harvard student.

3. *A Biographer:* See his "Oliver Cromwell," his own Autobiography, and others.

4. *An Essayist:* He has written more books than many authors whose fame rests upon their writings alone. His essays, in particular, are the key to his actions.

5. *A Natural Scientist:* As in authorship, his achievements in this field alone are enough to make him a man of note. Several leading natural scientists have said so.

6. *A Big-Game Hunter:* His shooting, like his vast reading, has been done in spite of exceeding nearsightedness. He is the most farsighted nearsighted man the country has produced.

7. *An Explorer and Discoverer:* Africa; South America; the River of Doubt.

8. *A Critic:* Just listen at any time!

9. *A Former Cowboy:* For two years he was a ranchman.

10. *Ten or a dozen LL.D.'s:* He has them from Harvard, Yale, Columbia, etc.

11. *An Editor:* It used to be the "Outlook." Now he writes signed editorials for the "Metropolitan Magazine."

12. *A Former Member of the State Legislature:* In his early twenties he was minority leader at Albany.

13. *A Practical Reformer:* No living man has brought about so many real reforms.

14. *A Veteran Colonel of Cavalry:* He says his "one great day" was that of San Juan Hill.

15. *A Former Assistant Secretary of the Navy:* He said then, and long before, all the things most of us are just finding out about preparedness.

16. *A Former Governor:* He was Governor of New York, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Colonel of the Rough Riders all in less than one year.

17. *A Nobel Peace Prize Winner:* For the Russo-Japanese peace. But people call him "dangerous."

18. *A Former Vice-President:* They did it to get rid of him, but—

19. *A Former President:* The youngest of all presidents. The president who sent the battle fleet around the world, who said "Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead," who concluded the peace of Portsmouth, and who started the Panama Canal.

New Haven, Connecticut, comes nearest, perhaps, to having all these things among its citizens, for it contains Ex-President Taft, Ex-Governor Baldwin, President Hadley and the Yale faculty, Harry Whitney, hunter and explorer, and the redoubtable "Mosey" King. But on other points New Haven fails. The only thing it has which Roosevelt has n't is Savin Rock—and there are those who think there is even a touch of Savin Rock about the Colonel.

Nor must it be forgotten that there are important Roosevelt items not included in my list. As a creator of popular and telling phrases, he surpasses George Ade and Oliver Herford combined. He has not only the gift for characterizing in a few words, but for coining new expressions and revivifying old ones.

Some one asks him how he is feeling. "I 'm feeling as fine as a bull moose!" replies the Colonel—and a political party has its name. "The big stick," "the square deal," "parlor Socialists," "rosewater reformers," "outpatients of Bedlam," "race suicide," "nature faker," "muckraker," "mollycoddle," "Armageddon," "malefactor of great wealth," "the strenuous life," "undesirable citizens," and, more lately, "hyphenated Americans": these expres-

sions which I happen to remember, and many more which you will think of, were either minted or put in general circulation by the Colonel. He goes hunting and the "Teddy Bear" comes into being; he becomes a soldier and both the term and type "Rough Rider" is made known to us. Everything he touches, everything he mentions, is made vital through him as through contact with a dynamo. A friend of mine who has known the Colonel a long time gives me the following items from among things that he has heard him say. Once when Roosevelt wished to explain the extreme utterances of certain reformers he said: "Every reform has a lunatic fringe." Again, in speaking of certain very minor European monarchs he termed them "the bush-league czars." One man he pronounced "As

clean as a hound's tooth," while another, a certain so-called statesman, was "An elderly fuddy-duddy with sweetbread brains." Somebody once asked him about European kings whom he had met. Whereupon the Colonel answered: "X—— [mentioning a monarch] would be president of some little peace society if he lived over here, but the kaiser would swing his ward." At another time when some people, failing to appreciate the democracy of Roosevelt's instincts, the enormous Americanism of the man, said that he wished to be a king, he declared to my friend: "The people who say that have n't seen as many kings as I have. Kings are a kind of cross between Vice-President and a permanent leader of the four hundred." Which reminds me, by the way, that of all

Roosevelt's positions there is just one with which we know he was born; and that one, social position in New York, is a thing for which, considered by itself, he has nothing but contempt.

Colonel Roosevelt's sense of humor is highly individualized. It seems to me that his vast experience of life in its larger aspects has caused his sense of humor to develop into Gargantuan proportions, so that the ordinary little joke-for-a-joke's-sake makes no great appeal to him. I believe that he expects a joke, as he expects a man, to *do* something, and that he is somewhat inclined to be impatient of what is merely amusing, just as he is impatient of mere eloquence in speeches and of the interruption of his own speeches by applause. In speaking, as in writing, he does not try for eloquence, but merely

to be clear and vigorous. He writes slowly and with difficulty, using a pad and pencil and making many corrections.

His appreciation of situations which are grotesque or comic is very rich. Time and again, while in the White House, he took boyish enjoyment in the weirdly assorted gatherings at his luncheon table. He has been known to entertain, at once, the British ambassador and the wildest kind of cowboys. I doubt that anything ever afforded him more amusement than furnishing a prize-fighter friend of his (John L. Sullivan, I think) with a letter of introduction to the dignified and sedate Governor Hughes of New York, now justice of the Supreme Court. Having a fine appreciation of both these men, Colonel Roosevelt was fascinated with

his mental picture of their meeting and their conversation, though it is perhaps needless to say he gave the letter only for good reasons.

It was characteristic of him that he knew them both well, for his taste in men, like his taste for affairs, is widely assorted. Once I asked him which of his various activities he had most enjoyed, and he was unable to say. So it is with men. He likes prize fighters, painters, cowboys, poets, diplomatists, hunters, sculptors, soldiers, naturalists, football players, novelists, men who can tell him about Irish or Norwegian sagas, about ancient Greek coins, or about almost anything else. It was the great sculptor, Saint-Gaudens, who spoke to him one day of the beauty of the old Greek coins, and it was characteristic of Roosevelt that he immedi-

ately caused new coins—the most beautiful since those of ancient Greece—to be designed and minted. So also, when he set his mind to architecture and landscape gardening, a fine arts council composed of noted men, serving without pay, came into being, and the new public buildings in Washington began to be harmoniously designed and placed. This fine arts council was, however, instinctively resented by the pork-barrel senators and congressmen, and it was disbanded by Mr. Taft shortly after he became president. At one hour of the day Roosevelt would be talking army reforms with an officer, at another jujutsu with a Japanese, or he would be writing to some poet whose work he had seen and liked.

And sometimes, when there was need, he would provide a government posi-

tion for a man whose work was good but not remunerative. Along with the rest of him there is something of the artist, and that is a tribute which can be paid with honesty to but few American presidents.

Naturally those of us who admire him like to call Roosevelt a "typical American," because it pleases us to think that an exceptional American is typical. In so far as he is a type produced by the United States he is typical; in so far as that type is common, he is not. He has always been the exception. A jack-of-all-trades, he is master of many. He rushes in where angels fear to tread, but he is no fool. He has been called a "man of destiny," but destiny has not done all the work, any more than God has done all the

work for the kaiser. Destiny has not helped to make Roosevelt, as much as Roosevelt has helped to make destiny—or perhaps I should say to make destiny make Roosevelt. For Roosevelt is not a living proof of what a man may do with gifts; he is a living proof of what a man may do despite the lack of them. Out of a weak child he made a powerful man; out of half-blindness he made a boxer, an omnivorous reader, a good shot; out of a liking for authorship, rather than a talent for it, he made a distinguished author; out of natural force and a feeling for the charm of things he made a style not only clear and forceful but, at times, charming. Out of a voice and a manner never meant for oratory he made a speaker. Out of a sense of duty he made a

soldier, out of a soldier a governor, out of a governor a vice-president, and—wonder of wonders—out of a vice-president a president!

I asked him once if he thought he had genius.

"Most certainly I have not," he declared with unhesitating conviction. "I 'm no orator, and in writing I 'm afraid I 'm not gifted at all, except perhaps that I have a good instinct and a liking for simplicity and directness. If I have anything at all resembling genius, it is in the gift for leadership. For instance, if we have war, you 'll see that young fighting officers of the army want to be in my command." Then, with a smile and in a manner the frankness of which was indescribably pleasing, he declared: "To tell the truth, I

like to believe that, by what I have accomplished *without* great gifts, I may be a source of encouragement to American boys."

No one knows better than Colonel Roosevelt the opinion in which he is held by various groups of his fellow countrymen. An interesting example of this knowledge occurs in his Autobiography, where he tells how his successful conclusion of the Russo-Japanese peace at Portsmouth made him personally unpopular with the people of both Russia and Japan because each nation thought that terms more favorable to itself might have been exacted. He writes:

"Of course what I had done in connection with the Portsmouth peace was misunderstood by some good and sincere people. Just as after the settle-

ment of the coal strike there were persons who thereupon thought that it was in my power, and was my duty, to settle all other strikes, so after the peace of Portsmouth there were other persons—not only Americans, by the way—who thought it my duty forthwith to make myself a kind of international Meddlesome Matty and interfere for peace and justice promiscuously over the world. Others, with a delightful *non sequitur,* jumped to the conclusion that inasmuch as I had helped to bring about a beneficent and necessary peace I must necessarily have changed my mind about war being ever necessary. A couple of days after peace was concluded I wrote to a friend: 'Don't you be misled by the fact that just at the moment men are speaking well of me. They will speak ill soon enough. As

Loeb remarked to me to-day, some time soon I shall have to spank some little international brigand, and then all the well-meaning idiots will turn and shriek that this is inconsistent with what I did at the peace conference, whereas in reality it will be exactly in line with it.' "

Those who would have the key to "My Policies," as the saying used to go when Roosevelt was in the White House, those who would have the key to Roosevelt himself, should read his Autobiography. It is rich reading. Those who would have a bunch of keys should also read his "Presidential Addresses and State Papers" and the essays published under the title "American Ideals." The last-mentioned collection holds peculiar interest because,

though written about twenty years ago, when he was president of the police board of New York, it is literally packed with statements which, with the change of a word here and there, may be directly and helpfully applied to the grave conditions which the nation faces now. To read these early writings without acknowledging the author's prophetic understanding is to be an intellectual contortionist or else wilfully to withhold from him the "square deal." I do not say that the reader of Roosevelt's works must inevitably become a Roosevelt man, but I do say that he must become a fairer, more intelligent, Roosevelt critic. Indeed, I might go farther and declare—despite the well-known American prerogative to express loose opinions on all subjects—that the opinion of Roosevelt, good or bad, ex-

pressed by a man who has failed to review Roosevelt's political life as a whole, is not worth listening to. I base this contention on two facts: First, that before I read the Roosevelt works my own opinions upon Roosevelt were loose and unintelligent. Second, the fact that his activities in the last thirty-seven years have been so numerous and so diversified that the casual citizen forgets the larger part of them.

In short, I believe that we are still too close to Mr. Roosevelt to appreciate him fully. Americans lack perspective on him, though I believe that Europeans, regarding him from afar, have a better appreciation of the rugged outlines of his character, precisely as those who look at a mountain twenty-five or fifty miles away can see it clearly, while those who live upon its slopes are con-

scious only of the little tract immediately about them.

Then there is the other side of Roosevelt, the side so many men have seen and adored. When he was president he never had what is termed "front." He never posed like a white marble statue of a statesman in the entablature of a white marble temple. He was, and is, one of *us*. We call him "T. R.," and he is perhaps the only man in the country who is known to us all by his initials. We call him "Teddy," but we do not call a marble statue "Woody."

Our "Teddy" does not suggest statuary. He is, perhaps, more like the movies—like a moving picture of ourselves as we should like to be. He is brave, hardy, and adventurous. *We*

should like to be brave, hardy, and adventurous, too, and we should be if it were n't for all kinds of things that interfered. He knows what he thinks. Well, don't *we* know what we think, sometimes? Certainly! He *says* what he thinks. So do we—except when we think it might get us into trouble. When some one is a liar he calls him one. How like us he is! We 've often wanted to do that, too. Yes, Teddy is a "regular fellow"—just like us. Of *course* we admire that side of him!

But then there 's another side. Certainly Teddy is all right in his way. Yes. He 's all right so long as he 's like *us*. But the trouble with him is that he is n't conservative, as we are. He is n't quite *safe*. He 's got a little too much—too much this-and-that about him. It 's too bad! *We* could tell him

what to do, but the trouble is, he 's headstrong. He won't listen. He just goes roaring on like a steam engine in pantaloons.

ROOSEVELT AS A PROPHET

ROOSEVELT AS A PROPHET

THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO

From "History of the Naval War of 1812" (written in 1883)

A miserly economy in preparation may in the end involve a lavish outlay of men and money which after all comes too late to more than partially offset the evils. It was criminal folly of Jefferson and Madison not to give us a force of regulars during the twelve years before the struggle. The necessity for an efficient navy is now so evident that only our almost incredible shortsightedness prevents our preparing one.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From "The War Between England and the United States" (written in 1895)

In America in one crisis at least the Peace at any Price men had cost the nation more in blood and wealth than the political leaders

most indifferent to war have ever cost it. There never was a better example of the ultimate evil caused by a timid effort to secure peace through the sacrifice of honor and the refusal to make preparations for war than that afforded by the War of 1812. Nothing can atone for the loss of the virile fighting virtues. Though war is an evil, an inglorious or unjustifiable peace is a worse evil. Peace is worth nothing unless it comes with sword girt on thigh. . . . The people as a whole deserved just the administrative weakness with which they were cursed by their rulers. Instead of keeping quiet and making preparations, they made no preparations and indulged in vainglorious boasting. Contempt is the emotion of all others which a nation should be least willing to arouse; and contempt was aroused by the attitude of those Americans who refused to provide an adequate navy and declined to put the country into shape for self-defense. . . . The victory in any contest will go to the nation that has earned it by thorough preparation.

NINETEEN YEARS AGO

From "The Bachelor of Art," March, 1896

It is strange, indeed . . . there should exist men who actually oppose the building of a navy by the United States, nay, even more, actually oppose so much as the strengthening of the coast defenses, on the ground that they prefer to have this country too feeble to resent any insult, in order that it may owe its safety to the contemptuous forbearance which it is hoped this feebleness will inspire in foreign powers. No Tammany alderman, no venal legislator, no demagogue or corrupt politician ever strove more effectively than these men are striving to degrade the nation and to make one ashamed of the name of America.

EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO

From "Washington's Forgotten Maxim," first delivered as an address in June, 1897

In this country there is not the slightest danger of an over-development of the warlike spirit, and there never has been any such danger. In all our history there has never been a time when preparedness for war was any menace to peace.

From the same address

A century has passed since Washington wrote: 'To be prepared for war is the most effectual means to promote peace.' We pay this maxim the lip loyalty we so often pay to Washington's words; but it has never sunk deep into our hearts. Indeed, of late years many persons have refused it even the poor tribute of lip loyalty.

American Ideals. Address at Naval War College, 1897

If we forget that we can only secure peace by being ready and willing to fight for it we may some day have bitter cause to realize that a rich nation which is slothful, timid or unwieldly, is an easy prey for any people which still retains those most valuable of all qualities, the soldierly virtues. We must strive to build up those fighting qualities for the lack of which in a nation no refinement, no culture, no wealth, no material prosperity can atone. To see this country at peace with foreign nations we will be wise to place reliance upon a first class fleet or first class battleships rather than on any arbitration

treaty which the wit of man can devise. Peace is a goddess only when she comes with sword girt on thigh. Cowardice in a race is the unpardonable sin, and a wilful failure to prepare for danger may be as bad as cowardice. The timid man who can not fight, and the selfish, shortsighted or foolish man who will not take the steps that will enable him to fight stand on almost the same plane. The men who have preached universal peace in terms that have prepared for the peace which permitted the continuance of the Armenian butcheries have inflicted a wrong on humanity greater than would be inflicted by the most reckless and war loving despot. Better a thousand times err on the side of over-readiness to fight than to err on the side of tame submission to injury, or cold blooded indifference to the misery of the oppressed.

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO

From "Military Preparedness and Unpreparedness," "The Century Magazine," November, 1899

The mistakes, the blunders, and the shortcomings in the army management during the summer of 1898 should be credited mainly

not to any one in office in 1898, but to the public servants of the people, and therefore to the people themselves, who permitted the army to rust since the Civil War with a wholly faulty administration, and with no chance whatever to perfect itself by practice, as the navy was perfected. In like manner, any trouble that may come upon the army, and therefore upon the nation, in the next few years, will be due to the failure to provide for a thoroughly reorganized regular army of adequate size last year; and for this failure the members in the Senate and the House who took the lead against increasing the regular army, and reorganizing it, will be primarily responsible. . . . In the Santiago campaign the army was more than once uncomfortably near grave disaster, from which it was saved by the remarkable fighting qualities of its individual fractions, and, above all, by the incompetency of its foes. To go against a well-organized, well-handled, well-led foreign foe under such conditions would inevitably have meant failure and humiliation. . . . The whole staff system, and much else, should be remodeled.

Above all, the army should be practised in mass in the actual work of marching and camping. Only thus will it be possible to train the commanders, the quartermasters, the commissaries, the doctors, so that they may by actual experience learn to do their duties, as naval officers by actual experience have learned to do theirs.

From "The Strenuous Life," first delivered as a speech in Chicago, 1899

Our army needs complete reorganization —not merely enlarging—and the reorganization can only come as the result of legislation. A proper general staff should be established. Above all, the army must be given the chance to exercise in large bodies. Never again should we see, as we saw in the Spanish War, major generals in command of divisions who had never before commanded three companies together in the field.

From the same speech

The army and the navy are the sword and the shield which the nation must carry if she is to do her duty among the nations of the earth—if she is not to stand merely as the China of the Western Hemisphere.

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO

From Message to Congress, December, 1901

The American people must either build and maintain an adequate navy or else make up their minds definitely to accept a secondary position in international affairs. There is no surer way of courting disaster than to be opulent, aggressive and unarmed. It is necessary to keep our army at the highest point of efficiency.

From Roosevelt's Message to the first session of the Fifty-seventh Congress, December, 1901

So far from being in any way a provocation to war, an adequate and highly trained navy is the best guarantee against war, the cheapest and most effective peace insurance. The cost of building and maintaining such a navy represents the very lightest premium for insuring peace.

From the same message

All we want is peace; and toward this end we wish to be able to secure the same respect for our rights from others which we are eager and anxious to extend to their rights in return, to insure fair treatment to

us commercially, and to guarantee the safety of the American people.

From "National Duties," a speech at the Minnesota State Fair, September 2, 1901

A good many of you are probably acquainted with the proverb: "'Speak softly and carry a big stick—you will go far.'" . . . Whenever on any point we come in contact with a foreign power, I hope we shall always strive to speak courteously and respectfully of that foreign power. Let us make it evident that we intend to do justice. Then let us make it equally evident that we will not tolerate injustice being done to us in return. Let us further make it evident that we use no words which we are not prepared to back up with deeds. Such an attitude will be the surest possible guarantee of that self-respecting peace, the attainment of which is and must ever be the prime aim of a self-governing people.

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO

From Message to Congress, December, 1902

Keep the army at the highest point of efficiency. Without manœuvering our army in

bodies of some little size it is folly to expect that it can be handled to advantage in the event of hostilities with any serious foe. Our officers and enlisted men must be thoroughly trained, especially in marksmanship. There is urgent need for a general staff. There should be no halt in the work of building up the navy, providing every year additional fighting craft. In battle the only shots that count are the shots that hit.

TWELVE YEARS AGO

From a speech made in San Francisco, May 14, 1903

Remember that after the war has begun it is too late to improvise a navy. A naval war is two-thirds settled in advance.

TEN YEARS AGO

From a speech at Williams College, June 22nd, 1905

Keep on building and maintaining at the highest point of efficiency the United States navy, or quit trying to be a big nation. Do one or the other.

EIGHT YEARS AGO

From a speech at Cairo, Ill., October, 1907

Our little army should be trained to the highest point.

Let us build up and maintain at the highest point of efficiency the United States navy. The best way to parry is to hit—no fight can ever be won without hitting—and we can hit only by means of the navy. The navy must be built and all its training given in time of peace. When once war has broken out it is too late to do anything.

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